

**State Board of Education  
March 16, 2010  
Item J**

**Team:** Standards and Assessment

**Discussion/Update Topic:** National Common Core Standards Initiative

**Alignment with Goals:**

Goal I. Support high-quality, innovative instruction to improve student achievement

Objective A. All students achieving their full potential

**Statutory Authority:** V.S.A. §165

**Background Information:**

Vermont is one of 48 states that signed an MOA in 2009 to work with CCSSO and the NGA in the development and adoption of a package of common standards K-12, culminating in College and Career-readiness Standards in mathematics, reading, writing, speaking and listening. This initiative is scheduled to finalize these standards in the early spring.

**Purpose of Discussion:**

The purpose of the discussion is to familiarize the SBE with the initiative to date and with future activities leading to SBE adoption of these standards, as well as implications for Vermont's current *Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities* and the implementation of revised learning expectations for students and educators.

**Cost Implications:**

Revision of Vermont's Learning Expectations will require both monetary support and significant staff time to conduct alignment studies, revise materials, communicate and solicit public comment, develop and/or identify supporting materials, communicate and involve key partners in the work, identify a professional development strategy and identify roles and responsibilities for supporting educators in the transition.

**Staff Available:** Gail Taylor; Michael Hock; Marty Gephart

## Common Core Standards Initiative

No Child Left Behind brought accountability but not necessarily consistency in the adoption of standards across state lines. As Americans become more mobile our children face increasing difficulty in moving from state to state or school to school, finding varying standards and related curriculum in the core areas of mathematics and language arts. The Common Core Standards Initiative is the beginning of a national effort to ameliorate those differences. Focused in the areas of mathematics, reading, writing, speaking and listening, the Common Core Standards are internationally benchmarked and designed to better prepare our young people for 21<sup>st</sup> century college and career opportunities. This initiative is led by the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) working with Achieve, ACT and the College Board, among others. Governors and State Commissioners of Education from 48 states, 2 territories and District of Columbia signed Memoranda of Understanding in 2009 to develop and adopt these standards, a requirement linked to the acceptance of significant state funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The first component of the Common Core Standards, the College and Career-readiness Standards, were released for public comment in September. They are available at: <http://www.corestandards.org/>. These standards define the knowledge and skills students need to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses and work training programs.

Additionally, the Common Core group has been developing K-12 standards which are currently scheduled to be released for public comment in mid-March. Vermont Department of Education (DOE) staff have participated in confidential review sessions and provided comment over several iterations of these standards. We found the College and Career-readiness standards to be a reasonably aligned and useful extension of our current end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade expectations. We have seen significant improvement in the K-12 standards and are optimistic that the version for public comment later this month will be even stronger in both content and format.

Upon finalization of the Common Core package, Vermont DOE will work with our partner states in the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) and Vermont stakeholders to conduct a complete alignment of our current *Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities* and associated Grade Expectations in mathematics and literacy with the Common Core. This formal process is designed to lead to State Board adoption by the end of 2010.

Once adopted, however, the work truly begins as educators in Vermont implement these standards across all learning environments. Student learning against 21<sup>st</sup> century standards will also need to be meaningfully assessed in a balanced system of national, state and local measures of student performance. The DOE will work with key associations, Vermont practitioners, and the broad range of stakeholders PK-16 to ensure the successful implementation of new standards and effective and appropriate methods of measurement for a variety of purposes; e.g., improving instruction; determining student proficiency in all critical standards, including those best measured by performance tasks; and program and school accountability.

We encourage you to familiarize yourself with this process and welcome any questions you might have. Please feel free to contact Gail Taylor (802-828-5158 or [gail.taylor@state.vt.us](mailto:gail.taylor@state.vt.us)) or Marty Gephart (802-828-1462 or [marty.gephart@state.vt.us](mailto:marty.gephart@state.vt.us)) to learn more about this work.